United States Department of Agriculture

**Forest Service**

Pacific Southwest Region

# Land Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report

October 2010

## Cleveland National Forest
## Fiscal Year 2009

October 2010

Dear Cleveland National Forest Stakeholders:

I am pleased to present the Cleveland National Forest's annual monitoring and evaluation report for your review. The purposes of this report are to determine if plans, projects, and activities are implemented as designed and in compliance with the Cleveland National Forest ("Cleveland NF") Land Management Plan; to evaluate the effectiveness of the Land Management Plan; and to help identify potential future adjustments to the Land Management Plan.

Monitoring is emphasized and identified as a key element in all programs to assure achievement of the Land Management Plan's desired conditions over time. This is the fourth monitoring and evaluation report produced since the Land Management Plan was revised in 2005. Every year we report on annual indicators of progress. In next year's report, we will address questions which are designed to help us evaluate progress toward the goals of the Land Management Plan. This report also includes an action plan aimed at improving Land Management Plan implementation and effectiveness.

Keeping Cleveland NF stakeholders informed of the results of our monitoring is important to me. This report will be posted on the Cleveland NF website at **http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland/**, along with additional information and opportunities on the Cleveland NF. If you are interested in becoming involved in project or other planning, please also see our national website at **http://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/**.

Sincerely,

*/s/ William Metz*

WILLIAM METZ
Forest Supervisor
Cleveland National Forest

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# Land Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report
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## 1. Introduction

This report documents the evaluation of projects selected from activities that were implemented on the Cleveland National Forest ("Cleveland NF") during fiscal year 2009, which began on October 1, 2008 and ended on September 30, 2009.

The Cleveland NF Land Management Plan went into effect on October 1, 2005. Projects with decisions signed after this date must comply with direction in the Land Management Plan. Decisions approved prior to this date that are not under contract or permit but continue to be implemented in phases are also expected to be consistent with the Land Management Plan. This report documents the evaluation of activities and the interpretation of monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of the Land Management Plan and addresses whether changes in the plan, or in project or program implementation, are necessary.

## 2. Methodology

Monitoring is described in all parts of the Land Management Plan, with monitoring requirements summarized in Part 3, Appendix C. The Cleveland NF monitoring guide further details the protocols that were used in this review. This guide was last modified in April 2009 and is available on request from the Cleveland NF environmental coordinator.

Part 1 of the Land Management Plan identifies outcome questions that will help to evaluate movement toward the desired conditions over the long term. The monitoring guide describes the baseline data that will be used to answer these questions and evaluate progress. A comprehensive evaluation of this progress will be prepared in the monitoring and evaluation report for fiscal year 2010. Databases maintained by the Forest Service track accomplishment of work related to objectives and strategies found in Part 1 of the Land Management Plan.

Implementation and effectiveness monitoring for Part 3 of the Land Management Plan wase conducted at the project or activity level. A 10 percent sample of projects and ongoing activities was randomly selected and visited to review the application and effectiveness of the design criteria. If problems in implementation were detected, or if design criteria were determined to be ineffective, then the team recommended corrective actions. The following questions were asked for each reviewed project or ongoing activity:

**1. By comparing expected results to actual results, did we accomplish what we set out to do?** The protocol monitoring questions for review of each project or activity are:

By reviewing site-specific checklists, were Land Management Plan goals, desired conditions, and standards incorporated into operational plans, such as burn plans, allotment management plans, and facility master plans?

Were National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") mitigation measures or Land Management Plan project design criteria implemented as designed? Were requirements from biological assessments, biological evaluations, heritage evaluations, and watershed assessments implemented? Were legal and other requirements, such as Land Management Plan consistency review checklists, indentified as applicable to the project or site? Were operational controls effective at protecting the environment as intended?

If the Cleveland NF did not accomplish what it had set out to do, the review team attempted to identify the reasons for failure. If the Cleveland NF did accomplish what it had set out to do, the review team attempted to identify the reasons for success. To evaluate effectiveness, the review team asked: Have project design criteria effectively improved environmental conditions as expected?

**2. Why did it happen?** The Cleveland NF emphasized and sought out underlying cause-and-effect relationships, not individual performance or behavior?

**3. What are we going to do next time?** What activities should be continued to sustain success? Are changes needed to correct any implementation- or effectiveness-related failures? If change is needed, will it require an amendment or administrative correction to the Land Management Plan?

Results, conclusions, and recommendations were documented on Land Management Plan monitoring and tracking forms and in this monitoring and evaluation report.

## 3. Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects, Activities, and Programs

In accordance with the methodology described in the monitoring guide, 10 percent of new projects or ongoing activity sites for each type of activity were randomly selected for review and are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Projects and activities selected for Land Management Plan monitoring and evaluation.**

| Ranger district | Project name (type and number) | Section in monitoring report | Documentation reviewed |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Descanso** | Samataguma (grazing allotment 1 of 2) | 3.3.2 | NEPA document, permit file |
| | Pine Creek Trailhead (trailhead, 1 of 1) | 3.6.5 | None |
| | Burnt Rancheria tract (recreation special use authorization, 1 of 2) | 3.5.1 | NEPA document, permit |
| | Garnet information kiosk (interpretive site) | 3.6.3 | None |
| | US Army (non-recreation special use permit) | 3.4.3 | Permit file |
| | Corte Madera vegetation treatment (mechanical, 10 % projects) | 3.2.1 | NEPA document, project file |
| | SUA331 | 3.7.1 | None |
| | SUA105 | 3.7.2 | None |
| | | | |
| **Palomar** | Dripping Springs (campground, 1 of 2) | 3.6.1 | Project file |
| | Oak Grove (campground, 2 of 2) | 3.6.2 | Project file |
| | Love Valley (grazing allotment, 2 of 2) | 3.3.1 | NEPA document, permit file |
| | Birch Hill (prescribed burn, 1 of 5) | 3.1.1 | NEPA document, project file |
| | East Grade (prescribed burn, 2 of 5) | 3.1.2 | NEPA document, project file |
| | Fry Creek (prescribed burn, 3 of 5) | 3.1.3 | NEPA document, project file |
| | Oak Grove Community Club (non-recreation special use permit, 10 percent of projects) | 3.4.1 | Permit file |
| | San Luis Rey (dispersed recreation site, 1 of 1) | 3.6.4 | Project file |
| | Upper San Diego River unauthorized route decommissioning (watershed/decommissioning projects, 10 percent of projects) | 3.7.4 | NEPA document, project file |
| | SUA56 (roads, temporary) | 3.7.3 | None |
| | 13S11, Cedar Creek Road (roads, level 2, native material) | 3.7.5 | NEPA document |
| | 9S06, Halfway Road (Roads, level 2, native material) | 3.7.6 | NEPA document |
| | | | |
| **Trabuco** | Hot Springs tract (recreation special use authorization, 2 of 2) | 3.5.2 | NEPA documentation, permit |
| | Los Pinos administrative site (prescribed burn, 4 of 5) | 3.1.4 | NEPA document, project file |
| | South Main Divide (prescribed burn, 5 of 5) | 3.1.5 | NEPA document, project file |
| | Western Riverside County MSHCP (non-recreation permit) | 3.4.2 | NEPA document, permit file |
| | 5S08, Harding Truck Trail (roads, level 2, native material) | 3.7.7 | NEPA document |
| | 5S04, Maple Springs Road (roads, level 2, native material) | 3.7.8 | NEPA document |
| | | | |

## 3.1 Fuels Projects

### *3.1.1 Birch Hill*

**Monitoring**
The site is located in the Palomar Mountain Place on the Palomar Ranger District. Activities on the Birch Hill site were analyzed and approved in a decision memo signed on June 20, 2003. The decision memo approved a project to treat between 65 and 80 percent of the vegetation within the project boundary with a combination of hand crews and mechanical methods to create a mosaic of treated and untreated intermixed vegetation.

**Results**
During fiscal year 2009, the Birch Hill site underwent two activities, as reported in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. Pruning to raise canopy height and discourage crown fire was implemented on approximately 10.7 acres. Compacting and crushing of fuels was implemented on approximately 76.8 acres. The project has been implemented as designed. Design criteria were incorporated into operational plans for the project.

**Conclusions**
The project was fully consistent with the previous land management plan but there was no consistency checklist with regard to the current Land Management Plan ("LMP"). However, based on review of the project and of the decision memo, the project was consistent with Goal 1.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to improve the ability of southern California communities to limit the loss of life and property and recover from the high intensity wildland fires that are a natural part of California's ecosystem (LMP, Part 1, pg. 19), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. No mitigation was discussed in the decision memo, but biological assessments and biological evaluations for wildlife and botany, a soils report, and a heritage review for the project were cited in the decision memo and are on file at the Palomar Ranger District office.

The Birch Hill area is included in the new Palomar Mountain Vegetation Treatment Program NEPA analysis that is currently underway and that is projected for completion sometime in fiscal years 2011 or 2012.

**Recommendations**
Update the NEPA decision, including documentation of consistency with the LMP.
Continue to work closely with contractors on the project/site to ensure continuing success.
Construct a higher-intensity fuel break nearer the homes in the area because there is always the need to re-enter the site.

### *3.1.2 East Grade*

**Monitoring**
The site is located in the Palomar Mountain Place on the Palomar Ranger District. Activities on the East Grade site were initially analyzed and approved in a decision memo signed on June 18, 1991. The decision memo approved a project to harvest dead standing timber, reduce understory fuel accumulations through burning, and enhance wildlife habitat on approximately 180 acres. The decision memo tiered to the East Grade Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment of August 27, 1985, as well as the associated addendum of February 3, 1987.

On September 15, 2002, the district ranger signed a letter to the file in which she documented her review of the June 18, 1991 decision memo as well as the East Grade Prescribed Burn file that documented entries into the project area between 1992 and 1997. Based on that information, the district ranger noted that no significant effects would result from continued fuels reduction activities in the area, and that no further environmental analysis would be required.

A biological evaluation approved May 13, 1991, is included in the project record. An archaeological reconnaissance report for the area had been previously completed on May 19, 1987 and was cited in the June 18, 1991 decision memo. A biological assessment and biological evaluation for proposed activities, which was completed on November 8, 2004, contains mitigation and project design criteria to minimize or eliminate potential impacts to California spotted owls.

**Results**
During fiscal year 2009, the East Grade site underwent four activities, as reported in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. Pruning to raise canopy height and discourage crown fire, piling of fuels, and rearrangement of fuels were undertaken on 55.2 acres. An additional 68.1 acres also underwent a rearrangement of fuels treatment. At the time of the field review for this project in April 2010, remaining project-related activities including only a few piles that were left to be burned.

**Conclusions**
The project as accomplished on the ground met objectives. The archaeological review for the project was not updated, as recommended in the LMP monitoring and evaluation report for fiscal year 2006, and new NEPA analysis has not yet been completed to account for new information. Fuel-reduction activities were completed, but in February 2010 a field review noted that a heritage site had been damaged during project-related activities, probably during fiscal year 2010.

The East Grade area is included in the new Palomar Mountain Vegetation Treatment Program NEPA analysis that is currently underway and that is projected for completion sometime in fiscal years 2011 or 2012. Under this new analysis, the project area will be larger than the area analyzed for the previous decision memo and will involve new reviews and field surveys of biological resources as well as heritage resources.

**Recommendations**
Update the NEPA decision, including documentation of consistency with the LMP, as per current plan that includes the East Grade area in the Palomar Mountain Vegetation Treatment Program. Protect archaeological and heritage sites in treatment areas to ensure that violations of such sites do not occur again.
The heritage program manager and fire management officer will conduct biannual meetings between heritage program and fire prevention personnel in order to determine the need for, and better coordinate cultural resource management activities necessary to support proposed vegetation management activities on the Cleveland NF. Information regarding proposed vegetation management activities will be submitted to the heritage program manager prior to project implementation, and projects will not be implemented without approval by the heritage program manager and/or implementation of adequate standard resource protection measures. The heritage program manager and the forest fire prevention officer will coordinate to develop and implement a more systematic process to identify portions of various fuels management projects on the Cleveland NF in order to ensure that post-project cultural resource management requirements are budgeted for and are completed within the required timeframe.

### *3.1.3 Fry Creek*

**Monitoring**
The site is located in the Palomar Mountain Place on the Palomar Ranger District. Activities on the Fry Creek site were analyzed and approved in a decision memo signed on December 16, 2004. The goals of the project, as described in the decision memo, were to re-establish desired conditions for natural vegetation and sustainable natural functions within the mixed conifer ecosystem and to reduce unnaturally high fuel loads to a level that reduces the threat of catastrophic wildfires on the communities of Palomar Mountain.

**Results**
During fiscal year 2009, the Fry Creek site underwent four activities, as reported in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. Pruning to raise canopy height and discourage crown fire was implemented on approximately 10.7 acres. Compacting and crushing of fuels was implemented on approximately 76.8 acres. The project has been implemented as designed. Design criteria from the biological assessment and biological evaluation were included in the project.

**Conclusions**
The project was consistent with the LMP. Successes for the project included maintaining a good tracking system to gauge the implementation of mitigation and resource protection measures, ensuring that clear descriptions of work to be accomplished were included in the contracts, and making sure that contractors were aware of the timeframes that were expected of them with regard to completing various stages of the project.

The Fry Creek area is included in the new Palomar Mountain Vegetation Treatment Program NEPA analysis that is currently underway and that is projected for completion sometime in fiscal years 2011 or 2012.

**Recommendations**
The ranger district did an excellent job ensuring that mitigation was tracked from the environmental analysis to the project, and that the mitigation to protect natural resources was implemented during project activities.

### *3.1.4 Los Pinos Administrative Site*

**Monitoring**
The site is located in the Elsinore Place on the Trabuco Ranger District. Activities on the Los Pinos administrative site were analyzed and approved in a decision memo signed on August 17, 2004. The project as described in the decision memo consists of a fuel break around the Los Pinos administrative site and the El Cariso hotshot camp, with the purpose of providing protection from fire for facilities at both locations.

**Results**
During fiscal year 2009, the Los Pinos administrative site underwent one activity, as reported in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. Approximately nine acres of piled material were burned. Thus far, the project has been implemented as designed. Design criteria were incorporated into operational plans for the project.

**Conclusions**
An LMP consistency checklist for the project was completed. The decision memo discussed project compliance with all provisions of the Clean Air Act, and consultation with the South Coast Air Quality Management District when any prescribed burning treatments were to be used. The biological assessment and biological evaluation for wildlife and botany, a soils report, and a heritage review were all completed for the project and are on file at the Trabuco Ranger District office.

This project is consistent with Goal 1.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to improve the ability of southern California communities to limit loss of life and property and recover from the high intensity wildland fires that are a natural part of California's ecosystem (LMP, Part 1, pg. 19), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

The NEPA analysis for this project is currently being redone due to the length of time since the decision memo was signed. Based on the likely extent of the potential proposed action, the NEPA analysis should be under an environmental assessment and subsequent decision notice.

**Recommendations**
Continue with plans to undertake a new NEPA analysis for the location under an environmental assessment.

### *3.1.5 South Main Divide*

**Monitoring**
The site is located in the Elsinore Place on the Trabuco Ranger District. Activities on the South Main Divide site were approved in a decision notice and finding of no significant impact dated March 5, 2009. The selected alternative implemented vegetation treatments on 293 acres along 3.75 miles of the existing South Main Divide fuel break. Vegetation treatment will consist of mastication, crushing, hand cutting and piling, and prescribed fire over a five-year period. The goal of project-related activities is to re-establish the effectiveness of a primary fuel break that is strategically located along a major ridgeline, and to protect life and property in the communities of Lake Elsinore, El Cariso Village, Sedco Hills, Lakeland Village, Wildomar, and Rancho Capistrano.

**Results**
During fiscal year 2009, the South Main Divide Fuelbreak System underwent one activity, as reported in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. Approximately 182 acres underwent a rearrangement of fuels activity. Thus far, the project has been implemented as designed. Design criteria were incorporated into operational plans for the project.

Extensive mitigation was included in the environmental assessment for the project and referenced in the decision notice. Mitigation included actions taken or limitations on activities to protect and preserve soil, wildlife, plant, visual, and heritage resources. In particular, the environmental assessment contained specific mitigation to protect the long-spined spineflower and canyon oak. Prior to treatment, the sites were checked on foot for ground-nesting birds.

In addition, because project-related activities were in areas adjacent to a well-traveled roadway and routes that receive off-highway vehicle traffic, the environmental assessment contained mitigation to buffer treatment areas by leaving strips of untreated vegetation along existing roads and off-highway vehicle routes, by placing barriers along roads and off-highway vehicle routes to prevent unauthorized motorized access, and by fencing areas where necessary to discourage such access. As of the time of the monitoring site visit in April 2010, vegetation left as buffers to prevent illegal motorized access to treated areas has proven successful.

**Conclusions**
This project is consistent with Goal 1.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to improve the ability of southern California communities to limit loss of life and property and recover from the high intensity wildland fires that are a natural part of California's ecosystem (LMP, Part 1, pg. 19), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

Activities associated with project implementation have been fully successful thus far. Mitigation and project design guidelines have been followed, and as per the decision notice, the project is consistent with the LMP. Biological assessments and biological evaluations for wildlife and botany, a soils report, and a heritage review were all completed for the project and are on file at the Trabuco Ranger District office.

**Recommendations**
Continue to implement the project as scheduled, and continue successful adherence to mitigation and design criteria.
Continue to monitor treatment areas to ensure that no unauthorized motorized vehicle access has occurred. In areas in which vegetation buffers have not successfully prevented such access, use rocks, barriers, or fences to prevent further incursions.

## 3.2 Vegetation Projects

### *3.2.1 Corte Madera*

**Monitoring**
The Corte Madera project is in the Morena Place on the Descanso Ranger District. Activities for the project were approved in a decision notice and finding of no significant impact dated February 9, 2009. The decision authorized treatments that would modify vegetation in the wildland/urban interface threat zone to reduce flame heights, radiate heat, and create safe anchor points in the area in the event of a wildfire. The project was designed to help protect life and property of persons living in the area.

**Results**
During fiscal year 2009, the Corte Madera vegetation reduction project underwent one activity, as reported in the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. Approximately 1,026 acres were masticated.

All mitigation measures were included in the contract to ensure that they were implemented. The biological assessment and biological evaluation were completed for the project and included in the project record.

**Conclusions**
The project is consistent with the LMP, as described in the decision notice. Thus far, the project has been implemented as designed. Mitigation measures are listed in the decision notice as well as in the environmental assessment. Design criteria were incorporated into operational plans for the project. The burn plan for the project had not yet been developed at the time of the monitoring field visit, but at that time mastication was the only activity that had been implemented at the site.

The project is consistent with Goal 1.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to improve the ability of southern California communities to limit loss of life and property and recover from the high intensity wildland fires that are a natural part of California's ecosystem (LMP, Part 1, pg. 19), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
The Descanso Ranger District did a commendable job ensuring that mitigation was clearly listed in the decision notice and that the mitigation was carried forward into the contract.
Continue with project implementation as planned.
Continue to include all mitigation in the relevant contracts to ensure that it is implemented.

## 3.3 Livestock Grazing Allotments

### *3.3.1 Love Valley Allotment*

**Monitoring**
The allotment is in the Palomar Mountain Place on the Palomar Ranger District. This was one of two allotments visited during the monitoring process, as established by protocol which directs the Cleveland NF to monitor ten percent of all on-going activities on the national forest. The allotment typically has 36 head of livestock which are pulled on March 31 annually.

**Results**
Monitoring done as part of routine permit administration on the Love Valley allotment has determined that existing resource conditions are meeting or moving toward desired conditions and the planning project file documents that management is consistent with all standards and goals detailed in the LMP. If problems are identified, the Cleveland NF range management specialist works with the permittees through modifying or adjusting the annual operating plans. The project file documents LMP consistency. Standards from the LMP regarding livestock grazing were incorporated into the permit. The allotment is managed via term permit and annual operating instructions. The project was implemented as designed.

Potential opportunities for improved management of the allotment include fencing the riparian stringer that crosses the meadow, rebuilding an exclosure, and developing a water tank at the northern edge of the meadow for recreational, grazing, or fire suppression purposes. In addition, at the eastern edge of the meadow is a decrepit barn that does not appear to be structurally sound, and which is filled with discarded materials, potentially including agricultural chemicals and pesticides. The barn should be considered for removal for health and safety reasons.

**Conclusions**
The project effort is consistent with Goal 6.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to move toward improved rangeland conditions as indicated by key range sites (LMP, Part 1., pg. 42), as well as with other objectives, standards and place emphases found in the LMP. Grazing management complies with the terms and conditions of the April 27, 2001 biological opinion for the Cleveland NF grazing program.

**Recommendations**
The range specialist did a commendable job maintain communication with the permittee regarding range condition.
Continue managing to standards. Seasons of use and rotations are appropriate.

### *3.3.2 Samataguma Allotment*

**Monitoring**
The allotment is in the Sweetwater Place on the Descanso Ranger District. This was one of two allotments visited during the monitoring process, as established by protocol which directs the Cleveland NF to monitor ten percent of all on-going activities on the national forest. The permit for the allotment allows 120 head-months, typically divided into 90 head for up to six weeks, or 30 head for three to four months. The allotment has many old road systems that remain from when the land was acquired by the federal government. In addition, Unit B of the allotment had an historic airstrip.

**Results**
Monitoring done as part of routine permit administration on the Samataguma allotment has determined that existing resource conditions are meeting or moving toward desired conditions and the planning project file documents that management is consistent with all standards and goals detailed in the LMP. If problems are identified, the Cleveland NF range management specialist works with the permittees through modifying or adjusting the annual operating plans. The project file documents LMP consistency. Standards from the LMP regarding livestock grazing were incorporated into the permit. The allotment is managed via term permit and annual operating instructions. The project was implemented as designed.

NEPA was completed for the allotment via a decision notice and finding of no significant impact signed in November 2001. The grazing permit was reissued after the LMP consistency review for the allotment was completed in 2006. Mitigation and other design criteria implemented for the allotment include an adjusted season of use based on annual monitoring.

**Conclusions**
The project is consistent with Goal 6.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to move toward improved rangeland conditions as indicated by key range sites (LMP, Part 1., pg. 42), as well as with other objectives, standards and place emphases found in the LMP. Grazing management complies with the terms and conditions of the April 27, 2001 biological opinion for the Cleveland NF grazing program.

**Recommendations**
The range specialist did a commendable job ensuring that the annual operating plan accounted for any changed conditions.
Continue managing to standards. Seasons of use and rotations are appropriate.

## 3.4 Lands Special Uses

### *3.4.1 Oak Grove Community Club*

**Monitoring**
The Oak Grove Community Club is located in the Aguanga Place on the Palomar Ranger District. The club is a privately owned facility located on the small portion of the Cleveland NF that lies on the eastern side of State Route 79 in the vicinity of the Oak Grove fire station and the Oak Grove campground. The club has been in operation since 1951 and operates as a rental building to various groups for a nominal fee that is used to improve and maintain the facility itself. The permitted are is approximately 0.75 acres in size.

**Results**
An LMP consistency review has been completed for the club, although no NEPA documentation exists for the permit itself. NEPA analysis is currently underway to renew the special use permit for operation of the club and is scheduled for completion in fiscal year 2011. A biological assessment and biological evaluation for the special use permit renewal has been completed and determined that continued operation of the facility will have no effect on any state, federal, or Forest Service threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species.

**Conclusions**
The project is consistent with Goal 3.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
Complete NEPA analysis for renewal of special use permit for operation of the club.

### *3.4.2 Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Research Study*

**Monitoring**
The Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan is given, via a special use permit, authorization to conduct non-invasive research studies for the San Diego mountain kingsnake in the vicinity of Santiago Peak in the Elsinore Place and the Upper San Juan campground in the San Mateo Place of the Trabuco Ranger District, and in the vicinity of the Dripping Springs campground in the Aguanga Place on the Palomar Ranger District. Use under the permit will end on December 31, 2011.

**Results**
NEPA clearance was issued via a letter to the file that categorically excluded the permit from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. No LMP consistency checklist was completed for the project. However, a review of the project file indicates that activities authorized by the NEPA decision are consistent with the LMP.

The project file contains clearance and documentation for heritage resources, wildlife, and botany. The project file contains documentation that the multiple species habitat conservation plan is covered by a state permit (#2835-2003-001-06) as well as a federal permit (10(a)(1)(A) #TE088609-0). The permit application notes that insufficient habitat for the survey exists on non-Forest Service lands. Core habitat requirements for the survey are defined as a "block of habitat of appropriate size, configuration, and vegetation characteristics to generally support the life history requirements on one or more covered species."

No effects to the human population in the areas covered by the permit are expected. Benefits of the survey include the increased knowledge about the species in southern California and monitoring data that may detect early signs of the species decline.

**Conclusions**
The project is consistent with Goal 6.2 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of native and desired non-native species (LMP, Part 1, pg. 44), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
Continue to allow survey activities as described in the permit.

### *3.4.3 United States Army temporary permit*

**Monitoring**
The United States Army was authorized via a temporary permit for two days of helicopter landing exercises at the Monument Peak helipad in the Laguna Place on the Descanso Ranger District. Training exercises were authorized to occur on two unspecified days between September 22, 2008 and October 3, 2008, excluding weekends. The permit allowed for a maximum of 10 landings per day. The permit expired on October 3, 2008.

**Results**
No LMP consistency review was completed for the project.

**Conclusions**
The project is consistent with Goal 7.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to retain natural areas as a core for a regional network while focusing the built environment into the minimum land area needed to support growing public needs (LMP, Part 1, pg. 46), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
No recommendations were made. The permit has expired and no further activities associated with the project will occur.

## 3.5 Recreation Special Uses

### *3.5.1 Burnt Rancheria Recreation Residence Tract*

**Monitoring**
This tract, which consists of 11 residences, is located in the Laguna Place on the Descanso Ranger District. This was one of two recreation residents tracts visited during the monitoring process, as established by protocol which directs the Cleveland NF to monitor ten percent of all on-going activities on the national forest.

**Results**
NEPA for the recreation residence tracts was complete with a decision notice and finding of no significant impact signed on May 11, 2009. New special use permits with a 20-year duration were issued to current permit holders who were found to be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of their existing permits. Current permit holders who were found not to be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of their existing permits were be issued a short-duration permit to take actions to achieve full compliance. Permit holders who do not achieve full compliance within the allotted timeframe may be required to sell or remove all structures.

Information on maintaining 30-foot and 100-foot fuels clearances around structures, as required to reduce the threat of wildfire damage, was sent to all recreation residence permittees in the area. As mitigation for damage to a National Register-eligible prehistoric site, the San Diego Gas and Electric Corporation paid to have pipe barriers installed to protect the site, which lies between the Burnt Rancheria tract and an adjacent recreation residence tract. Before any digging in the tract, an archaeological monitor must be present on the site.

**Conclusions**
Management of the recreation residence tract is consistent with Goal 3.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
The Descanso Ranger District permit administration did an excellent job of maintaining clear channels of contact with permittees that facilitated exchange of information, especially with regard to ensuring fuel clearance requirements.
Continue administration in accordance with the new permits.

### *3.5.2 Hot Springs Recreation Residence Tract*

**Monitoring**
This tract, which currently consists of 13 residences, is located in the Silverado Place on the Trabuco Ranger District. This was one of two recreation residence tracts visited during the monitoring process, as established by protocol which directs the Cleveland NF to monitor ten percent of all on-going activities on the national forest.

**Results**
As per a May 27, 2009 decision memo, the Forest Service will take possession of and remove one of the recreation residence cabins and terminate the associated special use authorization due to non-payment of fees. The recreation residence is currently uninhabited and has fallen into a state of disrepair and decay due to vandalism and exposure to the elements. The structure and all associated improvements will be removed from the site and the location will be returned to a natural appearance. These activities are pending.

NEPA for the recreation residence tracts was complete with a decision notice and finding of no significant impact signed on May 11, 2009. New special use permits with a 20-year duration were issued to current permit holders who were found to be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of their existing permits. Current permit holders who were found not to be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of their existing permits were issued a short-duration permit to take actions to achieve full compliance. Permit holders who do not achieve full compliance within the allotted timeframe may be required to sell or remove all structures. Two of the permittees at this tract received a term permit while the remainder were issued permits with a 20-year duration.

Permit administration was identified as an issue during the monitoring site visit. The Trabuco has two recreation residence project managers to administer permits for 60 residences, in addition to other duties associated with additional special use permits across the ranger district.

A concrete crossing of Hot Springs Creek was reconstructed at the request of permittees to ensure safe driving passage. During dry weather, road dust is often generated by traffic, which was identified as an issue by permittees.

A permit was issued for a metered test well to supply water to one of the cabins, as per findings in the environmental assessment that surface water from Hot Springs Creek can no longer be used.

**Conclusions**
Management of the recreation residence tract is consistent with Goal 3.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
Continue administration in accordance with the new permits and keep track of alterations needed to bring the two term permits into full compliance so that the longer-duration permit can be issued.

## 3.6 Recreation Projects and Ongoing Activities

### *3.6.1 Dripping Springs Campground*

**Monitoring**
The campground is an ongoing activity in the Aguanga Place on the Palomar Ranger District. This was one of two campgrounds visited during the monitoring process, as established by protocol which directs the Cleveland NF to monitor ten percent of all on-going activities on the national forest.

The BMP field survey included visual inspection of toilet facilities, refuse disposal facilities, the water faucets in the campground, and the distance of campsites from the stream. The campground is closed seasonally for arroyo toad considerations. The Land Management Plan standard is to discourage camping within 100 feet of perennial streams. Recreation operation and maintenance is an ongoing activity, and a new operation and maintenance plan is being developed.

**Results**
The campground was closed at the time due to arroyo toad restrictions. A toilet facility had been removed because it was in the riparian area at the end of the camping loop. Trash cans were in good repair and little trash was on the ground. The area received some usage by through-hikers who walked through the campground to get trail access.

**Conclusions**
The restroom removal and overall operation of the campground were consistent with Goal 3.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
Focus on getting equestrian campers/users back in the area.
When a capital improvement project proposal is submitted, consider: improvements to horse camping sites, including running waterlines to each site/corral; constructing a crossing on Arroyo Seco Creek for foot traffic on the trail that leads to the Agua Tibia Wilderness Area; closing campsite 11 because of proximity to the riparian area; and constructing additional informational signage for people regarding arroyo toad presence.
Consider altering/removing back campground loop because of potential that it might be damaged or "blown out" during flood conditions.

### *3.6.2 Oak Grove Campground*

**Monitoring**
The campground is an ongoing activity in the Aguanga Place on the Palomar Ranger District. This was one of two campgrounds visited during the monitoring process, as established by

protocol which directs the Cleveland NF to monitor ten percent of all on-going activities on the national forest.

**Results**
The campground, which is managed year-round, receives a high level of use, probably due to its proximity to well-traveled State Route 79 and the recent closing of the state park. Use of the campground by transients reportedly has increase. Guns have been discharged in the campground and law enforcement has been notified on an as needed basis.

Operations are appropriate with regard to trash disposal. Trash cans are provided and limited trash was seen on the ground. Many campsites are screened by vegetation. Operation and maintenance plan is being developed.

**Conclusions**
Operation of the campground was consistent with Goal 3.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. The campground was well managed.

**Recommendations**
Possibly put the campsites on a national, on-line reservation system.
When a capital improvement project proposal is submitted, consider: creating more pull-through campsites for longer recreational vehicles and trailers; running electricity and water to some campsites; and reducing the amount of vegetation between some campsites for security purposes.

### *3.6.3 Garnet Information Kiosk*

**Monitoring**
The information kiosk center is an ongoing activity in the Laguna Place on the Descanso Ranger District. This was an interpretive site visited during the monitoring process, as established by monitoring protocol.

**Results**
The kiosk is an ongoing recreation activity—no projects are planned regarding use of the site. The site is along the Sunrise Highway (also known as County Road S1) in the Laguna Mountain area. The site is an unmanaged recreational location that provides parking alongside the highway for a limited number of vehicles. Informational panels discuss the natural history of the area, and paw- and hoof-prints of local species have been pressed into the concrete walkways as educational devices.

**Conclusions**
The information kiosk is consistent with Goal 3.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. The site is well designed and well managed.

Funding for the kiosk came from post-fire monies that resulted from the Cedar fire of 2003. No problems with the location were identified at the time of the monitoring visit. However, there has been a small amount of vandalism to the site reported in the past. The site is located on a stretch of the highway that has clear views in both directions, so potential safety issues with merging or turning vehicle traffic are minimized.

**Recommendations**
The Cleveland NF did an excellent job with the design of the site.
Continue periodic checks of the location to report any potential problems with vandalism or trash dumping.

### *3.6.4 San Luis Rey Picnic Area*

**Monitoring**
The picnic area is an ongoing activity in the San Dieguito-Black Mountain Place on the Palomar Ranger District. This was a recreation area visited during the monitoring process, as established by monitoring protocol.

**Results**
The picnic area is an ongoing recreation activity—no projects are planned regarding use of the site, and there is no associated NEPA decision document for the picnic area.

Cut locks on the fee tube to remove money is a recurring problem—the locks have been replaced three times within the past year. A toilet vault has collapsed and requires replacement. Visitors construct rope swings on branches that hang over the river that may pose the risk of injury.

A wooden footbridge across the river that was approximately four feet wide by 50 feet long had been removed for safety reasons. The ability of the bridge to carry foot traffic safely had been compromised by periodic floods that had displaced the bridge slightly from its original location. A biological assessment and a biological evaluation were prepared in August 2007 for removal of the footbridge, but there was no associated NEPA documentation.

Visitor use in the area has declined over the past few years. The California Department of Fish and Game formerly stocked rainbow trout in the San Luis Rey River, but has ceased doing so. Intertubing from the San Luis Rey picnic area downstream to the La Jolla campground has also lessened over the years due to user conflicts with adjacent landowners.

**Conclusions**
Operation and maintenance of the picnic area is consistent with Goal 3.1 in the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. The site was clean of trash and picnic sites and tables were in decent to good condition. The removal of the wooden footbridge across the San Luis Rey River required a NEPA decision.

**Recommendations**
Increase the number of law enforcement and Cleveland NF staff patrols in the area to discourage vandalism to the fee tube.
Manage the area as habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher. Consider installing interpretive panels for the public.
Correct problems with drinking water hydrants/fountains.
Fix collapsed toilet vault.

### *3.6.5 Pine Creek Trailhead*

**Monitoring**
The trailhead is an ongoing activity in the Sweetwater Place on the Descanso Ranger District. This was a trailhead visited during the monitoring process, as established by monitoring protocol.

**Results**
There was no operation and maintenance file for this site. The U.S. Border Patrol monitors the trailhead due to concerns about activity by illegal immigrants passing through the area, but there are few other problems or issues with the location. New informational signs are scheduled for installation to replace the current old, worn signs that are difficult to read due to weathering. The current contract to have trash removed from the area once a week will be continued.

Use of the area is light and typically amounts to four or five cars during the weekends. Restoration has been done in the vicinity of the trailhead and parking area, and livestock has been removed from the allotment.

**Conclusions**
The trailhead is consistent with Goal 3.1 in the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. In general, the site was clean of garbage and was well managed.

**Recommendations**
Complete an LMP consistency review for the trailhead.

## 3.7 Road Projects or Maintenance

### *3.7.1 SUA 331*

**Monitoring**
This route segment is in the Laguna Place on the Descanso Ranger District. The segment appeared in the Cleveland NF geographic database as one that exists but for which a use or authorization is not known.

**Results**
The route segment is not authorized under any special use permit. During the monitoring site visit, the entire length of the segment was traversed and no past, current, or potential future use of the segment could be determined. The segment may have provided motorized vehicle access in the past, but there is no evidence of such use within the recent past. The roadbed is well-vegetated and shows little to no signs of rilling or erosion. The segment is not part of the current motorized vehicle use map for the Cleveland NF, nor does it serve any administrative purpose.

**Conclusions**
The route segment is not consistent with Goal 3.1 in the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. In particular, Goal 3.1 includes direction to maintain a transportation system of roads and trails that is environmentally sound and efficient to manage, as well as reduce the number of inventoried unclassified roads.

**Recommendations**
Remove the route segment from the Cleveland NF geographic database because it is not authorized under a permit and it serves no administrative function.
Continue to allow the traces of the roadbed to revegetate naturally.

### *3.7.2 SUA 105*

**Monitoring**
This route segment is in the Sweetwater Place on the Descanso Ranger District. The segment appeared in the Cleveland NF geographic database as one that exists but for which a use or authorization is not known.

**Results**
The route segment is not authorized under any special use permit. During the monitoring site visit, the entire length of the segment was traversed. Past use of the segment may have been for access to a structure that no longer exists, or it may have served only as a turn-around for vehicles driving on Forest Road 15S24. No current or potential future use of the segment could be determined. The roadbed is well-vegetated and shows little to no signs of rilling or erosion. The segment is not part of the current motorized vehicle use map for the Cleveland NF, nor does it serve any administrative purpose.

**Conclusions**
The route segment is not consistent with Goal 3.1 in the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. In particular, Goal 3.1 includes direction to maintain a transportation system of roads and trails that is environmentally sound and efficient to manage, as well as reduce the number of inventoried unclassified roads.

**Recommendations**
Remove the route segment from the Cleveland NF geographic database because it is not authorized under a permit and it serves no administrative function.
Continue to allow the traces of the roadbed to revegetate naturally.

### *3.7.3 SUA 56*

**Monitoring**
This route segment is in the Palomar Mountain Place on the Palomar Ranger District. The segment appeared in the Cleveland NF geographic database as one that exists but for which a use or authorization is not known. The segment runs along the southwestern border of a meadow on National Forest System lands at the upper side of Mendenhall Valley.

**Results**
The route segment is not authorized under any special use permit and is not authorized in the grazing permit for the allotment on which it is found. During the monitoring site visit, the entire length of the segment was traversed and no current or potential future use of the segment could be determined. The segment may have provided motorized vehicle access in the past, but there is no evidence of such use within the recent past. The roadbed is well-vegetated and shows little to no signs of rilling or erosion. The segment is not part of the current motorized vehicle use map for the Cleveland NF, nor does it serve any administrative purpose.

**Conclusions**
The route segment is not consistent with Goal 3.1 in the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases. In particular, Goal 3.1 includes direction to maintain a transportation system of roads and trails that is environmentally sound and efficient to manage, as well as reduce the number of inventoried unclassified roads.

**Recommendations**
Remove the route segment from the Cleveland NF geographic database because it is not authorized under a permit and it serves no administrative function.
Continue to allow the traces of the roadbed to revegetate naturally.

### *3.7.4 Upper San Diego River Unauthorized Route Decommissioning Project*

**Monitoring**
This project is in the Upper San Diego River Place on the Palomar Ranger District. Activities for the project were approved in a decision memo dated May 16, 2009. Wildfires burned through the Upper San Diego River watershed in 2003 and 2007, making unauthorized routes that are not part of the National Forest Transportation System more visible and accessible to motorized vehicle traffic. Many of these newly de-vegetated routes have potential to impact natural resources negatively if they are not decommissioned. The decision authorized 16.6 miles of unauthorized routes to be decommissioned or converted to trails. Decommissioning activities included restoring roadbeds to natural grades and using pipe barriers and rock barriers to limit access to foot traffic.

**Results**
Mitigation measures are discussed in the decision memo and include maintaining access to a permitted road in the project area, cleaning all equipment that enters the worksite to minimize the potential for introduction of noxious species, and using weed-free straw where unauthorized routes have experienced soil disturbance and require seeding with native species to facilitate decommissioning. The project is consistent with the LMP, as described in the decision memo.

The contract for decommissioning failed to be executed. The only work done on the project at the time of the field monitoring review in April 2010 was the burned area emergency response ("BAER") activities associated with the 2007 Witch fire. Approximately 40 percent of the treatments approved for implementation have been completed, including activities on routes 73, 75, 76, 103, 761, 765, R-1, and R-4, as described in the decision memo. Activities approved for decommissioning of other routes remain pending.

Trespass issues from private property in the northern part of the project area has made obliteration and decommissioning difficult because a person or persons repeatedly removes Forest Service boundary markers.

**Conclusions**
The project is consistent with Goal 5.1 in the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to improve watershed conditions through cooperative management (LMP, Part 1, pg. 39), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

**Recommendations**
Ensure that a remedy is found for the contracting delay so the project can be implemented in its entirety.
Find solution, either through law enforcement or increased Forest Service personnel patrols, to the problem with removal of boundary markers.

### *3.7.5 Cedar Creek Road (Forest Road 13S11)*

**Monitoring**
Cedar Creek Road is a Level 2 native material road in the Upper San Diego River Place on the Palomar Ranger District.

**Results**
Road maintenance is undertaken under a decision memo and executed via contracts. All activities are within the existing road prism. Best management practices are included in every roads contract. The project was designed and implemented to avoid negative resource impacts. The timing of work was seasonally appropriate. The success of the road maintenance program is limited by funding that is inadequate to cover maintenance every year. Road maintenance NEPA for the forest is scheduled to be updated in fiscal year 2010.

**Conclusions**
The ongoing road maintenance on this road met BMP protocols. The road work is consistent with goals 3.1 and 5.1 of the LMP, which direct the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33) and to improve watershed conditions through cooperative management (LMP, Part 1, pg. 39), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

Maintenance was done well, but the frequency of needed maintenance has been limited due to low levels of funding. No LMP amendment or correction is required.

**Recommendations**
Continue to address maintenance to the extent funded.
If possible, provide for annual maintenance or other treatment for this road.
Continue to take advantage of special funding to address roads issues.
Continue with plans to update NEPA for road maintenance. The next project planning should address the entire road system and allow for maintenance of various levels of roads.

### *3.7.6 Halfway Road (Forest Road 9S06)*

**Monitoring**
Halfway Road is a Level 2 native material road in the Aguanga Place on the Palomar Ranger District.

**Results**
Road maintenance is undertaken under a decision memo and executed via contracts. All activities are within the existing road prism. Best management practices are included in every roads contract. The project was designed and implemented to avoid negative resource impacts. The timing of work was seasonally appropriate. The success of the road maintenance program is limited by funding that is inadequate to cover maintenance every year. Road maintenance NEPA for the forest is scheduled to be updated in fiscal year 2010.

**Conclusions**
The ongoing road maintenance on this road met BMP protocols. The road work is consistent with goals 3.1 and 5.1 of the LMP, which direct the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33) and to improve watershed conditions through cooperative management (LMP, Part 1, pg. 39), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

Maintenance was done well, but the frequency of needed maintenance has been limited due to low levels of funding. No LMP amendment or correction is required.

**Recommendations**
Continue to address maintenance to the extent funded.
If possible, provide for annual maintenance or other treatment for this road.
Continue to take advantage of special funding to address roads issues.
Continue with plans to update NEPA for road maintenance. The next project planning should address the entire road system and allow for maintenance of various levels of roads.

### *3.7.7 Harding Truck Trail (Forest Road 5S08)*

**Monitoring**
Harding Truck Trail is a Level 2 native material road in the Silverado Place on the Trabuco Ranger District.

**Results**
Road maintenance is undertaken under a decision memo and executed via contracts. All activities are within the existing road prism. Best management practices are included in every roads contract. The project was designed and implemented to avoid negative resource impacts. The timing of work was seasonally appropriate. The success of the road maintenance program is limited by funding that is inadequate to cover maintenance every year. Road maintenance NEPA for the forest is scheduled to be updated in fiscal year 2010.

**Conclusions**
The ongoing road maintenance on this road met BMP protocols. The road work is consistent with goals 3.1 and 5.1 of the LMP, which direct the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33) and to improve watershed conditions through cooperative management (LMP, Part 1, pg. 39), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

Maintenance was done well, but the frequency of needed maintenance has been limited due to low levels of funding. No LMP amendment or correction is required.

**Recommendations**
Continue to address maintenance to the extent funded.
If possible, provide for annual maintenance or other treatment for this road.
Continue to take advantage of special funding to address roads issues.

Continue with plans to update NEPA for road maintenance. The next project planning should address the entire road system and allow for maintenance of various levels of roads.

### *3.7.8 Maple Springs Road (Forest Road 5S04)*

**Monitoring**
Maple Springs Road is a Level 2 native material road in the Silverado Place on the Trabuco Ranger District.

**Results**
Road maintenance is undertaken under a decision memo and executed via contracts. All activities are within the existing road prism. Best management practices are included in every roads contract. The project was designed and implemented to avoid negative resource impacts. The timing of work was seasonally appropriate. The success of the road maintenance program is limited by funding that is inadequate to cover maintenance every year. Road maintenance NEPA for the forest is scheduled to be updated in fiscal year 2010.

**Conclusions**
The ongoing road maintenance on this road met BMP protocols. The road work is consistent with goals 3.1 and 5.1 of the LMP, which direct the Cleveland NF to provide for public use and natural resource protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 33) and to improve watershed conditions through cooperative management (LMP, Part 1, pg. 39), as well as other LMP objectives, standards, and place emphases.

Maintenance was done well, but the frequency of needed maintenance has been limited due to low levels of funding. No LMP amendment or correction is required.

**Recommendations**

Continue to address maintenance to the extent funded. If possible, provide for annual maintenance or other treatment for this road.
Continue to take advantage of special funding to address roads issues.
Continue with plans to update NEPA for road maintenance. The next project planning should address the entire road system and allow for maintenance of various levels of roads.

## 4. Annual Indicators of Progress Toward Cleveland NF Goals

This section documents the monitoring of indicators of progress toward the desired conditions described in the Cleveland NF Land Management Plan ("LMP"). Tracking annual indicators will help identify trends over time, as well as support the comprehensive evaluation that will be prepared in the fifth year after implementation of the LMP. Information below is presented for goals listed in Part 1 of the LMP.

### Forest Goal 1.1: Community protection (LMP, Part 1, pg. 19)

**Goal:** Improve the ability of southern California communities to limit loss of life and property and recover from the high intensity wildland fires that are part of California's ecosystem.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be monitored:** Vegetation treatments in the wildland/urban interface.

**Monitoring questions:** Has the Cleveland NF made progress in reducing the number of acres that are adjacent to development within wildland/urban interface defense zones that are classified as high risk?

**Reference values (long-term/annual):** Fire hazard/risk; annual indicators.

In fiscal year 2009, 3,496 acres of hazardous fuel treatments in the wildland/urban interface were reported as accomplished. This contributes to the National Strategic Plan (objectives 1.1 and 1.3). The LMP identifies a more specific indicator focused on measuring progress toward increasing the level of the Cleveland NF fuels program in the wildland/urban interface defense zone described in the LMP.

**Background on this indicator**

The wildland/urban interface defense zone—that portion of the wildland/urban interfact that is directly adjacent to structures (LMP, Part 3, pg. 5, Standard S7; LMP, Appendix K)—has a variable width determined at the project level. The maximum width of the defense zone is defined for general vegetation types in Standard S7. For the LMP analysis, the maximum width was used. This information was used to represent the present, or "baseline," extent of the wildland/urban interface defense zone.

*High hazard fuels* are those that have the potential to burn with high intensity. Fire intensity affects suppression effectiveness in protecting structures in interface areas. A key strategy in the LMP is to reduce fire hazard adjacent to communities and structures to improve suppression effectiveness and provide defensible space in interface areas.

*Risk* is related to human values or risk of loss. The presence of structures is the indicator of risk in this analysis. Due to rapid development of private land in southern California, the inventory of areas with structures is constantly changing. Maps representing the wildland/urban interface defense zone are typically a year or more old and therefore should only be considered an

estimate of the actual area pending period updates. The actual presence of communities and substantial structures is determined at the project level. In other words, the defense zone coverage or map is not an LMP decision. The decision is to apply the direction in LMP standards S7 (including Appendix K) and S8 to areas that are actually adjacent to communities or substantial structures at the time of project planning. Areas where old structures have been removed are not part of the defense zone. No Cleveland NF-wide, site-specific inventory of fuel hazard within the defense zone exists. In addition, high hazard conditions can be dynamic, returning in as little as five years after a fire in some vegetation types. For this reason, the hazard indicator is assumed to be high in all areas until a project level assessment determines otherwise. Therefore, the monitoring task is to track the level of management effort directed at reducing fire hazard in the wildland/urban interface defense zone including keeping the inventory of the actual defense zone up-to-date.

The method of calculating progress toward Goal 1.1 is summarized in Table 2. Indicators of progress toward Goal 1.1 will be calculated by using the wildland/urban defense zone from the Land Management Plan analysis database. Acres of treatments in the wildland/urban defense zone were calculated for each of the fire regimes and entered into column D in Table 2. These entries represent the annual indicator of progress toward the desired condition. Every five years the number of high hazard acres within the defense zone should be calculated to use for documenting the trend as a long-term indicator. Acres documented as being treated in the corporate reporting system can be assumed to no longer be considered a high hazard.

**Table 2: Progress in treatment of wildland/urban interface defense zone, adjustments to baseline.**

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Baseline acres from fiscal year 2008 LMP analysis** | **Acres removed due to new info on presence of substantial structures** | **Acres added due to new info on presence of substantial structures** | **Acres treated in WUI defense zone, per corporate database** | **(A-B) + (C-D) (adjusted acres)** |
| Fire regime I: 5,797 acres | 0 | 0 | 37 | **5,760** |
| Fire regimes III, IV, and V: 3,037 acres | 0 | 0 | 145 | **2,892** |
| **Total: 8,834 acres** | **0** | **0** | **182** | **8,652** |

Table 3 shows the status of fuels accomplishment as per the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database. An annual query of this database measures the progress that the Cleveland NF has made to reduce the number of acres adjacent to development within wildland/urban interface defense zones and that are classified as high risk. Use of spatially explicit information for adjusting the baseline is important so the cause of changes in the numbers can be evaluated. Knowing if the change is due to improved inventory information, actual treatments, or both is important. Simply adding the annual indicator—that is, the number of acres treated—and subtracting it from the baseline could over-count maintenance treatments and would not take into account acres added due to new development. Part of our evaluation should determine if new development is adding to the defense zone increase because we have an LMP strategy to prevent that from happening through involvement in local planning.

The Cleveland NF focused vegetation treatments in the wildland/urban interface (see Table 2). The total area treated during fiscal year 2009 was 2,815 acres. Some 69.5 percent of the acres treated were in the wildland/urban interface threat zone, while 6.5 percent of the acres treated were in the wildland/urban interface defense zone. Of the 677 acres treated outside the threat and defense zones, 484.6 acres, or 72 percent, were treated via mastication as part of the Corte Madera project on the Descanso Ranger District.

**Table 3: 2009 treatments.**

| Activity | Wildland/Urban Interface Class | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Threat zone | Environment | Defense zone | |
| Broadcast burning | 46.5 | 0 | 0 | **46.5** |
| Burning of piled material | 226.5 | 9.4 | 29.3 | **265.2** |
| Chipping of fuels | 46.5 | 0 | 0 | **46.5** |
| Compacting or crushing of fuels | 56.2 | 34.0 | 20.7 | **110.9** |
| Mastication | 471.3 | 484.6 | 70.6 | **1026.5** |
| Piling | 639.9 | 123.3 | 41.6 | **804.8** |
| Pruning to raise canopy height | 432.9 | 1.2 | 41.9 | **476.0** |
| Rearrangement of fuels | 569.2 | 46.0 | 11.2 | **626.4** |
| Thinning for hazardous fuel reduction | 63.6 | 0 | 29.2 | **92.9** |
| **Sum of all acres treated (some areas had more than one activity type)** | **2552.6** | **698.5** | **244.5** | **3495.6** |
| **Total area treated (2815 acres)** | **1956** | **677** | **182** | **--** |

## Forest Goal 1.2: Restoration of forest health (LMP, Part 1, pg. 20)

**Goal:** Restore forest health where alteration of natural fire regimes has put human and natural resource values at risk.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be monitored:** Vegetation condition.

**Monitoring questions:** Is the Cleveland NF making progress toward maintaining or increasing the percent chaparral and coastal sage scrub in Condition Class 1?

**Reference values (long-term/annual):** Condition Class Fires Regime IV; annual indicators.

This indicator gauges departure from either the minimum or the maximum fire return interval. In 2006, the fire regime condition class monitoring indicator was updated using new mapping procedures. In the new GIS maps, information is provided on presumed fire return intervals from the period preceding Euroamerican settlement ("presettlement") and for contemporary fire return intervals, and comparisons are made between the two.

Current differences between presettlement and contemporary fire return intervals are calculated based on mean, maximum, and minimum values. This map is a joint project of the California

chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Forest Service Region 5 Ecology Program (David Schmidt, fire ecologist, The Nature Conservancy; Hugh Safford, regional ecologist, U.S. Forest Service, Region 5).

The information was compiled from the fire history literature, expert opinion, data collection, and vegetation modeling. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire and Resource Assessment Program fire history database was used to characterize current fire regimes. The vegetation type stratification was based on the 1996 CALVEG map (U.S. Forest Service Remote Sensing Lab) for the four national forests in southern California.

For data limitations in these datasets, see the CALVEG mapping metadata:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/rsl/clearinghouse/data.shtml

and the California fire history database metadata:

http://www.frap.cdf.ca.gov/data/frapgisdata/select.asp

Table 4 displays the baseline status as of 2006 for departures from the mean fire return intervals. Areas where the current interval is more frequent than expected are shown as negative numbers, while areas that have had longer than expected fire return intervals are shown as positive numbers.

A condition class of either 1 or -1 indicates that fire return intervals are within the expected range of variability around the mean for a given fire regime. Condition classes 2 or -2 indicate a moderate departure from the expected mean, while condition classes 3 or -3 indicate a high departure from the expected mean. Both moderate and high departures may indicate that altered fire regimes pose a risk to the ecological condition of the site. Type conversion from high fire frequencies (Class -3) or de-forestation from wide-spread high severity crown fires (Class 3) are more likely as the condition class rating increases.

**Table 4: 2006 baseline status for departures from mean fire return interval.**

| Condition class | Acres |
|---|---|
| -3 | 40,319 |
| -2 | 172,048 |
| -1 | 138,992 |
| 1 | 30,466 |
| 2 | 9,503 |
| 3 | 21,932 |
| Unclassified | 9,197 |
| **Total** | **422,457** |

## Forest Goal 1.2.1: Fire Regime I, 0 to 35 years, low severity (LMP, Part 1, pg. 22)

**Goal:** Reduce the potential for widespread losses of montane conifer forests caused by severe, extensive, stand-replacing fires.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be monitored:** Vegetation condition.

**Monitoring questions:** Is the Cleveland NF making progress toward increasing the percentage of montane conifer forests in Condition Class 1?

**Reference values (long-term/annual):** Condition Class Fire Regime I; annual indicators.

Table 5 shows that in fiscal year 2009 a total of 754 acres were treated in montane conifer in all fire regime condition classes. By far the majority of the montane conifer acres treated (514 acres) was in fire regime condition class 3. Treating hazardous fuels in these areas that have missed expected fires is consistent with Goal 1.2.1 of the LMP, which directs the Cleveland NF to reduce the potential for widespread losses of montane conifer forests caused by severe, extensive, stand replacing fires (LMP, Part 1, pg. 22).

**Table 5: Acres treated in montane conifer by fire regime condition class.**

| Activity | Fire Regime Condition Class | | | | | Total[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -2 | -1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Broadcast burning | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| Burning of piled material | 11 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 153 | **183** |
| Chipping of fuels | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| Compacting or crushing of fuels | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | **14** |
| Mastication | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **18** |
| Piling | 11 | 8 | 0 | 34 | 149 | **202** |
| Pruning to raise canopy height | 1 | 16 | 1 | 43 | 210 | **271** |
| Rearrangement of fuels | 15 | 20 | 0 | 29 | 2 | **66** |
| Thinning for hazardous fuel reduction | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| **1 – Totals may vary due to rounding** | **38** | **62** | **1** | **139** | **514** | **754** |

## Forest Goal 1.2.2: Maintain or increase percent chaparral and coastal sage scrub in condition class 1 (LMP, Part 1, pg. 25)

**Goal:** Restore forest health where alteration of natural fire regimes have put human and natural resource values at risk. Reduce the number of acres at risk from excessively frequent fires while improving defensible space around communities.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be monitored:** Vegetation condition.

**Monitoring questions:** Is the Cleveland NF making progress toward maintaining or increasing the percent chaparral and coastal sage scrub in Condition Class 1?

**Reference values (long-term/annual):** Condition Class Fires Regime IV, annual indicators.

As shown in Table 3, as of 2006, approximately 51 percent of the forest land area was at moderate to high risk of type conversion from excessively frequent fires (i.e., in condition classes -2 and -3). Unlike in Fire Regime I (conifer forest), vegetation treatments in condition class -2 or -3 move the area away from the desired condition by adding another burn or disturbance to a location that has already burned too frequently. The Cleveland NF strategy in treatment of chaparral and coastal sage scrub, therefore, is to focus vegetation management into direct protection of communities or in pre-identified strategic locations where protection of communities can be improved, such as major ridge tops that are upslope from developed areas. Fire history patterns show that fires often stop in the same locations due to topography or, sometimes, man-made features such as reservoirs or highways.

Table 6 shows that 691 total acres were treated in chaparral and coastal sage scrub, 26 percent of which were in positive condition classes, meaning that they were within the natural range of variability expected for this vegetation type. Most of the acres in negative condition classes—45 percent of the total acres treated in chaparral and coastal sage scrub—were treated by a rearrangement of fuels prescription.

**Table 6: Acres treated in chaparral and coastal sage scrub by fire regime condition class.**

| Activity | Fire Regime Condition Class | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -3 | -2 | -1 | 1 | 2 | |
| Broadcast burning | 5 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | **11** |
| Burning of piled material | 0 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 18 | **42** |
| Chipping of fuels | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **3** |
| Compacting and crushing of fuels | 0 | 25 | 11 | 0 | 0 | **36** |
| Mastication | 0 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 0 | **24** |
| Piling | 0 | 71 | 15 | 38 | 34 | **158** |
| Pruning to raise canopy heights | 0 | 1 | 16 | 0 | 39 | **56** |
| Rearrangement of fuels | 16 | 102 | 190 | 16 | 27 | **351** |
| Thinning for hazardous fuels reduction | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | **10** |
| **Total** | **21** | **222** | **271** | **59** | **118** | **691** |

Goal 1.2.3, which relates to maintaining long fire-free intervals in habitats where fire is naturally uncommon, is not addressed in this report because this goal was developed at a scope that accounted for all four southern California national forests and is primarily important on the three other national forests, not the Cleveland NF.

**Forest Vegetation and Health Monitoring**

The Forest Service Remote Sensing Lab provides inventories of vegetation resources in an ecological framework for determining changes, causes, and trends to vegetation structure, health,

biomass, volume, growth, mortality, condition, and extent. The existing Cleveland NF vegetation map was completed in 2003 and is scheduled to be redone sometime in the near future. Details of the vegetation monitoring section may be found at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/rsl/projects/

Aerial detection surveys are conducted annually. An overview of these surveys, as well as maps for the Cleveland NF, may be found at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/spf/fhp/fhm/aerial/2007/index.shtml.

Widespread oak tree mortality is occurring on federal, state, private, and Native American lands in San Diego County, including the southern portion of the Cleveland NF. Researchers from the Forest Service and other agencies discovered that dead and dying oaks were infested with a beetle called the gold-spotted oak borer (*Agrilus coxalis)*. The oak borer infests and kills California black oak, coast live oak, and canyon live oak. Due to current and potential impacts, both regionally and throughout California, multiple agencies and organizations are working together in the research, education, and outreach efforts regarding this pest. Information on the gold-spotted oak borer may be found at:

http://groups.ucanr.org/GSOB/.

Forest health is monitored via annual aerial surveys that detect tree mortality. Survey information and mapping (in .pdf format or view using Google Earth and Google Maps) is available at the following websites, shown by year of survey:

2010: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/spf/fhp/fhm/aerial/2010/kmz/index.shtml
2009: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/spf/fhp/fhm/aerial/2009/kmz/index.shtml
2008: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/spf/fhp/fhm/aerial/draft/index.shtml
2007: http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/spf/fhp/fhm/aerial/2007/index.shtml

## Forest Goal 2.1: Invasive species (LMP, Part 1, pg. 31)

**Goal:** Reverse the trend of increasing loss of natural resource values to invasive species.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be monitored:** Invasive species.

**Monitoring questions:** Does the Cleveland NF inventory of invasive plant and animal species show a stable or decreasing trend in acres of invasive species?

**Reference values (long-term/annual):** Invasive plants and animals; annual indicators

During fiscal year 2009, according to the Forest Service Activity Tracking System database, approximately 192 acres of invasive species were treated on the Cleveland NF. This included

181 acres of riparian perennial tree species (e.g., tamarisk and tree tobacco) on the Palomar Ranger District, six acres of mustard and three acres of Spanish broom on the Trabuco Ranger District, and 1.5 acres of Spanish broom and 0.3 acres of yellow star thistle re-treated on the Descanso Ranger District.

## Forest Goals 3.1 and 3.2: Managed recreation in a natural setting (LMP, Part 1, pp. 33 to 36)

**Goals:** (3.1) Provide for public use and natural resource protection. (3.2) Retain a natural-evolving character within wilderness.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be measured:** (3.1) Visitor use of the Cleveland NF. (3.2) Wilderness use.

**Monitoring questions:** (3.1) Are trends in indicators and visitor satisfaction surveys indicating that the Cleveland NF has provided quality, sustainable recreation opportunities that result in increased visitor satisfaction? (3.2) Are trends in indicators and visitor satisfaction surveys depicting the Cleveland NF has provided solitude and challenge in an environment where human influences do not impede the free play of natural forces?

**Reference values (long-term or annual):** (3.1) Visitor satisfaction; annual indicators. (3.2) Natural processes wilderness; annual indicators.

Annual indicators are recreation facilities managed to standard including natural resource protection as described in Goal 3.1. Meaningful Measures provides a framework for measuring this but the linkage to resource protection is not as clear. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring of resource protection actions required by standards S34 and S50 (including Appendix D) help to measure the resource protection element of this goal.

Long-term indicators are visitor use trends by activity and overall satisfaction from the National Visitor Use Monitoring ("NVUM") survey. The baseline NVUM survey reported 97 percent visitor satisfaction. The fiscal year 2010 Cleveland NF Land Management Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report will include the findings of the updated NVUM survey. However, the report is currently available online at:

http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum/

**Heritage Resources**
The desired condition is to preserve or enhance significant heritage resources. A total of 66 individual undertakings were analyzed for potential effects by the heritage program staff and determined by the heritage program manager to be compliant with the requirements contained in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act or the Regional Programmatic Agreement.

- Of the 66 total projects, 10 were determined to be compliant with the requirements of Section 106.
- Of the 66 total projects, 56 were determined to be compliant under the stipulations of the Regional Programmatic Agreement.
- Of the 56 undertakings implemented under the Regional Programmatic Agreement, 12 required archeological surveys in support of the assessment of potential effects.
- Surveys conducted in support of undertakings proposed during the reporting period totaled approximately 12 acres.
- Eleven new prehistoric sites were identified and recorded as a result of surveys.
- Of the 12 surveys conducted, four involved recreation and lands special use projects, three involved engineering and roads projects, three were in support of hazardous fuels management projects, one involved a vegetation management project, and one was conducted in support of a fish, wildlife, and plant resources management activity.
- Of the 56 undertakings implemented under the Regional Programmatic Agreement, 16 contained cultural resources within the area of potential effects that required the recommendation of standard resource protection measures in order to avoid potential effects, including but not limited to flagging, avoidance, and monitoring of cultural resources.
- Cultural resources were not identified within the area of potential effects of 40 of the 56 undertakings implemented under the Regional Programmatic Agreement, and there was no potential for effects to cultural resources that would require additional consideration under the provisions of the Regional Programmatic Agreement associated with these undertakings.
- Thirty of the proposed undertakings implemented under the Regional Programmatic Agreement were within areas that had been previously surveyed for the presence of cultural resources. The previous survey reports encompassing the area of potential effects of these proposed undertakings were identified, reviewed, and deemed adequate by the heritage program manager for the purpose of determining the potential for effects to cultural resources associated with the proposed undertakings.

**Air Resources**

The desired condition is to remediate and prevent human caused impairments to air quality values. Under the USDA-Forest Service Region 5 air quality monitoring program, a sampling station near the Agua Tibia Wilderness Area monitors the air quality near this Class I airshed. Information about this station, which is part of the Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments ("IMPROVE") national monitoring network, can be found at:

http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/improve/Data/data.htm (raw data)
http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/improve/Publications/improve_reports.htm (reports)

## Forest Goals 4.1a and 4.1b: Energy and minerals production (LMP, Part 1, pp. 37 and 38)

**Goals:** (4.1a) Administer minerals and energy resource development while protecting ecosystem health. (4.1b) Administer renewable energy resource developments while protecting ecosystem health.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be measured:** (4.1a) Mineral and energy development. (4.1b) Mineral and energy development.

**Monitoring questions:** (4.1a) Has the Cleveland NF been successful at protecting ecosystem health while providing mineral and energy resources for development? (4.1b) Has the Cleveland NF been successful at protecting ecosystem health while providing renewable resources for development?

**Reference values (long-term or annual):** (4.1a) Energy success at protecting ecosystem health; annual indicators. (4.1b) Renewable resources success at protecting ecosystem health; annual indicators.

No minerals or energy development projects were approved in fiscal year 2009.

## Forest Goals 5.1 and 5.2: Watershed function (LMP, Part 1, pg. 39) and riparian condition (LMP, Part 1, pg. 41)

**Goals:** (5.1) Improve watershed conditions through cooperative management. (5.2) Improve riparian conditions.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be monitored:** (5.1) Watershed. (5.2) General forest activities.

**Monitoring questions:** (5.1) Is the Cleveland NF making progress toward sustaining Class 1 watershed conditions while reducing the number of condition class 2 and 3 watersheds? (5.2) Is the Cleveland NF making progress toward reducing the number of streams with poor water quality or aquatic habitat conditions?

**Reference values (long-term/annual):** (5.1) Sustaining Class 1 watershed conditions while reducing the number of condition class 2 and 3 watersheds; annual indicators. (5.2) Stream condition in impaired state-listed 303(d) streams; annual indicators.

With regard to Goal 5.1, a watershed assessment was done as part of the Land Management Plan revision process (see Table 7). Another watershed assessment will occur during the comprehensive evaluation for fiscal year 2010 monitoring.

**Table 7. Watershed condition baseline.**

| Outcome indicator | Desired condition | Baseline Watersheds | Year 5 | Trend | Trigger |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Watersheds in Condition Class 1, Good | Maintained condition ratings | 4 | | | Decrease in number of Class 1 watersheds |
| Watersheds in Condition Class 2, Moderate | Maintained or improved condition ratings | 8 | | | Decrease in number of Class 2 watersheds |
| Watersheds in Condition Class 3, poor | Improved condition ratings | 2 | | | Degrading conditions in Class 3 watersheds |

With regard to Goal 5.2, the LMP baseline was four streams listed as 303(d) impaired:

1. Santiago Creek, Reach 4.
2. Silverado Creek.
3. Aliso Creek.
4. San Juan Creek, Lower.

Of these, the 303(d) mapped reaches for Silverado and Santiago creeks are located on National Forest System lands. As of 2006, the following reaches on National Forest System lands were mapped in GIS files of the 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments (requiring total maximum daily loads ("TMDLs"), being addressed by the Environmental Protection Agency approved TMDLs and being addressed by actions other than TMDLs) created for reporting purposes by the state water resources control board and the regional water quality control board: Santiago, Silverado, Long Canyon, Temecula, and Pine Valley creeks.

In addition, portions of the following are listed as 303(d) and mapped segments are located below National Forest System lands: Aliso and San Juan creeks, and the San Luis Rey River. The state water resources control board website contains a disclaimer that GIS mapping of the TMDLs is subject to change as the effort may ultimately address more or less area than shown in present files.

The Cleveland NF's annual Best Management Practices Evaluation Program report was prepared and sent to the regional water quality control board. In addition, road decommissioning accomplishment contributes to improved watershed function. Road decommissioning results are noted under the Forest Goal 7.1 section.

## Forest Goal 6.1: Rangeland condition (LMP, Part 1, pg. 42)

**Goal:** Move toward improved rangeland conditions as indicated by key range sites.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be measured:** Livestock grazing.

**Monitoring questions:** Is forest rangeland management maintaining or improving progress toward sustainable rangelands and ecosystem health by increasing the number of key areas in good and fair condition?

**Reference values (long-term or annual):** Rangeland condition; annual indicators.

Table 8 displays the baseline and trend monitoring for the range and grazing for fiscal year 2009.

**Table 8: Baseline and trend monitoring for range allotments in fiscal year 2009.**

| Outcome indicator | Desired condition | Previous monitoring | Current | Trend | Trigger |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Livestock grazing areas in **good** condition | Maintain condition rating | 13 | 13 | Stable | Decrease in number of key areas in good condition |
| Livestock grazing areas in **fair** condition | Maintain/improve condition rating | 11 | 12 | Up | Decrease in number of areas in fair condition |
| Livestock grazing areas in **poor** condition | Improve condition rating | 2 | 1 | Stable | Degrading conditions in key areas poor condition |

Table 9 displays allotment conditions for fiscal year 2009. More recent assessment information is provided where it is available.

**Table 9: Allotment grazing conditions.**

| Allotment, pasture | Condition | Assessment type | Year |
|---|---|---|---|
| Black Mountain | Good—stable | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Corte Madera, Lower Bear Valley | Good—recovering from wildfire | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Corte Madera, Lower Bear Valley, mesic | Fair—recovering from wildfire, moderate OHV trespass damange | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Guatay | Good—good rainfall year, good diversity of desirable species, high ground cover | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Indian Creek | Ungrazed, not monitored | -- | n/a |
| Laguna, Kitchen Valley | Moderate | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Laguna, Cameron, La Posta Creek | Moderate | Region 5 long-term trend monitoring | 2009 |
| Laguna, Joy Pasture | Low—2006 (needs re-read and site potential assessment) | Region 5 long-term trend monitoring | 2006 |
| Laguna, Long Canyon Pasture | Low—2006; Moderate—2009 | Region 5 long-term trend monitoring | 2009 |
| Laguna Meadow, mid-meadow plot | Good—highly productive year | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Laguna Meadow, Las Rasalies plot | High 2000, moderate 2005, moderate 2009, trend stable | Region 5 long-term trend monitoring | 2009 |
| Love Valley | High—stable | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Mendenhall, Lower | Good—highly productive year | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Mendenhall, Upper | Good—highly productive year | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Mesa Grande, Kelley unit | Fair, improving | Rapid | 2008 |
| Miller Mountain | Good | Rapid | 2007 |
| Samataguma | Good | Annual monitoring compliance | 2009 |
| Tenaja | Good | Rapid | 2007 |
| Verdugo | Good | Annual compliance monitoring | 2009 |
| Warner Ranch | Good | Annual compliance monitoring | 2008 |

## Forest Goal 6.2: Biological resource condition (LMP, Part 1, pg. 44)

G**oal:** Provide ecological conditions to sustain viable populations of native and desired non-native species.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be measured:** General forest activities.

**Monitoring questions:** Are trends in resource conditions indicating that habitat conditions for fish, wildlife, and rare plants are in a stable or upward trend?

**Reference values (long-term or annual):** Threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species baseline; management indicator species habitat trends; annual indicators.

**Species monitoring:** In 2009, the Cleveland NF continued with monitoring specified in applicable biological opinions. The Cleveland NF annual report to the US Fish and Wildlife Service included the following species and monitoring activities, where applicable:

- Quino checkerspot: Contract for surveys let in 2009 for work in 2010.
- Laguna Mountains skipper: Survey report sent separately to US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Arroyo toad: Comments submitted for reproposed critical habitat.
- California red-legged frog: No action on 2009.
- Mountain yellow-legged frog: No action in 2009.
- Southwestern willow flycatcher: Surveys completed through a partnership with the US Geological Survey.
- California gnatcatcher: Restoration project underway.
- Least Bell's vireo: Checked population in Hauser and Cottonwood creeks.
- Western yellow-billed cuckoo: No action in 2009.
- Stephen's kangaroo rat: No action in 2009.
- San Diego thornmint: No action in 2009.
- Munz's onion: Checked on Elsinore Peak population.
- Braunton's milkvetch: No action in 2009.
- Encinitas baccharis: No action in 2009.
- Nevin's barberry: Rechecked population at Vail Lake.
- Thread-leaved brodiaea: No action in 2009.
- Vail Lake ceanothus: No action in 2009.
- Slender-horned spineflower: No action in 2009.
- Oval-leaved dudleya: No action in 2009.
- San Bernardino bluegrass: Contracted with consultant to check populations.

In addition, surveys for the following threatened and endangered species occurred:

**Laguna Mountains skipper.** The Cleveland NF no longer surveys the Laguna Mountains for the skipper because the species is considered to be extirpated in the area. A contractor continued surveys in the Palomar Mountains. The Cleveland NF continued monitoring recreation use at the El Prado and Laguna campgrounds and the Meadow Kiosk. No problems were identified. Monitoring for the species continued at eight grazing exclosures on Laguna Meadow.

**Arroyo toad.** Monitoring of road kill and the effects of recreation residence permit renewal on arroyo toads were completed.

**Southwestern willow flycatcher.** Monitoring indicates that the species continues to use existing habitat and territories near the San Luis Rey River.

**California gnatcatcher.** In 2008 the Palomar Ranger District started a coastal sage scrub restoration project in the upper San Diego River area. Seeding is being used to regenerate coastal sage scrub vegetation that has been lost due to wildfires. The project plans are to seed 331 acres of habitat.

**San Bernardino bluegrass.** Surveys for San Bernardino bluegrass were undertaken in the Mendenhall, Laguna Meadow, and Bear Valley areas.

Monitoring requirements are being updated through new site-specific biological opinions. These will be updated on a priority basis.

The environmental baseline identifies the extent of occupied and suitable habitat for each species and describes ongoing activities authorized by the Forest Service in relation to the occupied and suitable habitats. Implementation of LMP strategies over time is expected to cause changes, both positive and negative, in the baseline. Annual reporting of activities that may change the baseline conditions (including recovery actions proposed, new conservation strategies and new information from surveys or inventory) for threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species is recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see pg. 296 Conservation Recommendation 1 – FWS-773.9).

The Cleveland NF re-initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the LMP for critical habitat designations, which included updating the baseline for critical habitat and built area (see Table 10).

**Table 10. Summary of Baseline Activities in Critical Habitat on the Cleveland NF.**

| Common name<br>*Scientific Name* | Critical Habitat Status | Total Acres | Built Area | Dispersed Recreation | Fuel-break | WUI Defense | WUI Threat | Active Grazing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Plants** | | | | | | | | |
| San Diego thornmint<br>***Acanthomintha ilicifolia*** | Designated | 671 | 6.7 | 0.0 | 50.0 | 17.5 | 527.4 | 0.0 |
| Munz's onion<br>***Allium munzii*** | Designated | 176.1 | 24.9 | 1.5 | 19.9 | 0.0 | 176.1 | 0.0 |
| Nevin's barberry<br>***Berberis nevinii*** | Designated | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Thread-leaved brodiaea<br>***Brodiaea filifolia*** | Designated | 249.3 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 106.1 | 0.0 |
| Vail Lake ceanothus<br>***Ceanothus ophiochilus*** | Designated | 196.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 196.7 | 0.0 |
| San Bernardino bluegrass<br>***Poa atropurpurea*** | Designated | 1,115 | 63.1 | 338.5 | 0.0 | 211.1 | 1,115 | 1,115 |
| **Invertebrates** | | | | | | | | |
| Quino checkerspot butterfly<br>***Euphydryas editha quino*** | Designated | 1,748 | 0.2/<br>11.0 | 0.0/<br>1.9 | 0.0/<br>0.0 | 0.0/<br>1.3 | 23.1/<br>912.7 | 0.0/<br>0.0 |
| Laguna Mountains skipper<br>***Pyrgus ruralis lagunae*** | Designated | 3,544.2 | 301.0 | 962.2 | 61.1 | 760.2 | 2,783.9 | 2,957.9 |
| **Fish** | | | | | | | | |
| Southern steelhead<br>***Oncorhynchus mykiss*** | Designated | 84.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| **Amphibians/Reptiles** | | | | | | | | |
| Arroyo toad<br>***Bufo californicus*** | No critical habitat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Birds** | | | | | | | | |
| Southwestern willow flycatcher<br>***Empidonax traillii extimus*** | Designated | 48.2 | 0.0 | 4.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 48.2 | 0.0 |
| California gnatcatcher<br>***Polioptila californica californica*** | Designated | 11,910.1 | 43.3 | 65.9 | 66.8 | 23.8 | 10,049.1 | 0.0 |

The Cleveland NF will continue to consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding riparian obligate species and ongoing activities.

**Conclusions**

The threatened and endangered species monitoring program is working well in most areas. A process is in place to update procedures based on updated information and monitoring results. Changes are expected through updated consultations with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Management Indicator Species**

Twelve management indicator species were selected to monitor certain habitat types and issues, as described in the Land Management Plan (Part 1, pp. 44 and 45). These species will be monitored along with other indicators of progress toward achieving desired conditions for biological resources. A Cleveland NF management indicator species report was prepared to

describe the environmental baseline conditions. For California black oak there is also tracking of mortality (see Forest Vegetation and Health Monitoring under Goal 1.2). Approximately 40 management indicator species reports were completed for projects on the Cleveland NF for fiscal year 2009. None of the reports found that project implementation would affect populations or habitat trends for management indicator species.

**Recommendations**
Continue required monitoring.

As operational plans are developed for recreation sites, ensure institutional memory of problem resolution by making sure to document protection measures used in the past, whether on an annual, periodic, or one-time basis. These may be documented in the INFRA database for each site.

## Forest Goal 7.1: Natural areas in an urban context (LMP, Part 1, pg. 46)

**Goal:** Retain natural areas as a core for a regional network while focusing the built environment into the minimal land area necessary to support growing public needs.

**Activity, practice, or effect to be measured:** Built landscape extent land adjustment.

**Monitoring questions:** Is the Cleveland NF balancing the need for new infrastructure with restoration opportunities or land ownership adjustment to meet the desired conditions?

**Reference values (long-term or annual):** Built area and land ownership complexity; annual indicators.

Goal 7.1 calls for minimization of the built environment. Roads are one element of the built environment and are part of the outcome indicators for this goal. In addition, Goal 3.1 instructs the Cleveland NF to remove roads that are determined to be unnecessary through a roads analysis and the analysis required by NEPA.

Table 11 below shows that the Cleveland NF has analyzed approximately 55 miles of unauthorized routes—many of which impact riparian conservation areas or habitat for endangered or threatened species—between 2006 and 2009 to determine if they should be closed and decommissioned to preserve resource values. Approximately 50 miles of unauthorized routes have been decommissioned. Current NEPA analyses may result in additional miles of unauthorized, unneeded routes being decommissioned.

**Table 11: Miles of road in Forest Service jurisdiction by type, 2006 baseline and 2009**

| Maintenance level | | National Forest System road | Permitted road | Unauthorized, undetermined | Unauthorized, unneeded, existing | Unauthorized, unneeded, decommissioned |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not applicable | 2006 | -- | -- | 154.0 | -- | 4.0 |
| | 2009 | -- | -- | 99.1 | 11.6 | 49.5 |
| 1: Basic custodial care (closed) | 2006 | 34.4 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | 2009 | 34.4 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 2: High clearance vehicles | 2006 | 280.9 | 136.9 | -- | -- | -- |
| | 2009 | 281.2 | 133.5 | -- | -- | -- |
| 3: Suitable for passenger cars | 2006 | 11.5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | 2009 | 11.5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4: Moderate degree of user comfort | 2006 | 54.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | 2009 | 54.2 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 5: High degree of user comfort | 2006 | 18.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | 2009 | 18.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Totals | 2006 | 399.1 | 136.9 | 154.0 | -- | 4.0 |
| | 2009 | 399.1 | 133.5 | 99.1 | 11.6 | 49.5 |

# 5. LMP Monitoring Protocol Recommendations

This year the team continued with the open-ended-question format used for the first time in the fiscal year 2008 monitoring and evaluation report. The monitoring guide, as revised in the spring of 2009, was used. The guide is available to the public upon request to the Cleveland NF environmental coordinator.

For the fiscal year 2010 monitoring review, one recommendation is to have brief office meetings to review all documentation before making site visits.

# 6. Monitoring Team Recommendations

The fiscal year 2009 monitoring team re-emphasized recommendations from previous reports, including: Continue progress made to analyze the need for road segments that are found on the Cleveland NF but which are not part of the National Forest Transportation system, are not authorized under a special use permit, and are not needed for administrative use. Where applicable, after NEPA analysis has been completed, remove these road segments from the Cleveland NF geographic database.

Using silvicultural expertise on interdisciplinary teams for projects that involve applicable vegetation management projects on the Cleveland NF.

## 7. Potential LMP Amendments and Corrections

The fiscal year 2008 monitoring and evaluation report anticipated the proposed exchange of the Viejas and Hulburd tracts through a NEPA planning process, which would result in a plan amendment to remove these tracts from "Other Designations—Recreation Residence Tracts" table 479 (LMP, Part 2, p. 13). This project has not yet moved forward into the planning process.

A decision on the Sunrise Powerlink project that was signed in July 2010 resulted in an amendment to the Land Management Plan and will be discussed in the monitoring and evaluation report for fiscal year 2010.

A decision on a project to locate a communications facility at El Cariso may result in an amendment to the Land Management Plan.

## 8. Action Plan, Forest Leadership Team

The following are the actions that will be taken in response to LMP monitoring, including those actions from past monitoring that need to continue:

Continue efforts to work together with other agencies and partners to plan and carry out a coordinated strategic plan of research and management actions to address the gold spotted oak borer and oak mortality situation.

Emphasize integrated fuels treatments in Fire Regime I (montane conifer) where there is work to be done to address the missed fire return, risk of loss, and protection of mountain communities, and also where the Cleveland NF can rely on a broad range of public support for implementing treatments that are needed to move toward the desired condition. The Cleveland NF can also maintain existing fuelbreaks as well as include community protection projects in Fire Regime IV. Continue to engage the interested public in a dialogue about fuels issues and collaboration on fuels treatments.

Continue to emphasize decommissioning of undetermined, unneeded roads and resolving the status of "temporary roads." This work serves to improve watershed function and further LMP goals and objectives.

Complete the forest-wide road maintenance NEPA documentation.

Emphasize management of quality controls for the NEPA planning process to ensure consistency with the LMP and NEPA.

Continue to fine tune an interdisciplinary process for developing the program of work, striving to create an integrated program of work that is responsive to common priorities under the LMP.

Focus project identification with an emphasis on an integrated watershed management approach to take advantage of efficiencies of scale and geographic locations.

Continue to prepare operations and maintenance plans for Forest Service recreation sites over time.

## 9. Public Participation

Groups or individuals who have indicated an interest in Land Management Plan monitoring received a postcard notifying them of the availability of this report on the Cleveland NF web site, or whom to contact to obtain a print version of this document.

## 10. Members of the Monitoring Team

Members of the fiscal year 2009 monitoring team were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Fuels/Fire: | Dan Mapstone, Cleveland NF Assistant Fire Management Officer |
| Roads/Engineering: | Mark Marquette, Cleveland NF Road Manager |
| Soils/Hydrology: | Jason Jimenez, Cleveland NF Hydrologist |
| Planning: | Pete Gomben, Cleveland NF Environmental Coordinator |
| Resources/Planning: | Gloria Silva, Cleveland NF Resources Staff Officer |

Program monitoring information was contributed by:

| | |
|---|---|
| Archaeology: | Steve Harvey, Cleveland NF Heritage Resource Program Manager |
| Wildlife: | Kirsten Winter, Cleveland NF Biologist |
| Range: | Lance Criley, Cleveland NF Range Management Specialist |

Members of the monitoring team express their gratitude to the program and project leaders on the Descanso, Palomar, and Trabuco ranger districts, for their support throughout the monitoring and evaluation process, including efforts to compile planning documents and host field project site visits.